



# NEWS RELEASE

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Bonnie Coffey, director, 402/441-8695

## **COFFEY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL BOARD**

*Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission shares national spotlight, wins national excellence award*

The Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission (LLWC) was represented by its director, Bonnie Coffey, at the national convention of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW), held at Eden Roc Renaissance Resort & Spa in Miami Beach, Florida, from July 13-17, 2005. Hosted by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, the convention's theme, "Get on Your Feet, Make it Happen!," was based on the hit song by Gloria Estefan to encourage women to change their communities for the better.

LLWC Director Bonnie Coffey, who has served on the national board for the past two years as secretary, was elected president at its 36<sup>th</sup> annual convention and installed at the closing banquet, featuring U.S. District Court Judge Marcia Cooke. Also elected to serve with her for the next two-years was Glenda Woods, Kentucky Commission on Women, vice president; Robin Stultz, West Virginia Women's Commission, secretary, and Debra Sober, Baltimore County Commission on the Status of Women, treasurer.

"The annual NACW convention is an ideal opportunity to gather with colleagues across the country who are working on similar goals," said Coffey. "We're able to establish and strengthen our coalitions, expand knowledge on issues impacting women, network with other professionals who work with women's commissions, and share programs that reflect the issues that impact women today. Our participation demonstrates that Lincoln and Lancaster County recognizes the important challenges that face women today and that they are strongly committed to addressing those changes."

The NACW is a nonpartisan membership organization composed of regional, state, county and local commissions created by government to improve the status of women, as well as individual and affiliate members who believe in the work of women's commissions across the country. NACW is committed to equality and justice for women by increasing the effectiveness of member commissions and serving as their national voice. There are approximately 270 state, county and local commissions for women located in the United States and its territories.

During the Achievement Awards luncheon, Coffey accepted the "NACW Outstanding Achievement Award" on behalf of LLWC for its work in developing a medical information booklet. *My Medical Records Manager* is a six-page booklet that tracks information on a patient's health insurance, emergency contacts, childhood illnesses, allergies, medical history, current medications, surgeries, immunizations, and doctors' contacts. Information on patient rights and tips for navigating the healthcare system are also included. The booklets are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese and on audio cassette in Arabic. *My Medical Records Manager* booklets and cassette tapes are available free of charge to any individual, agency or organization who serves clients or customers who are in need of tracking their health care services to improve patient/provider services and professional relationships. The luncheon featured guest speaker Carmen McCrink, Ph.D., chair of the Educational Leadership/Higher Education Administration Department at Barry University, and Dolores Crockett, regional administrator of the Women's Bureau,

U.S. Department of Labor.

In addition to meetings for association business, convention attendees had the opportunity to hear Florida Representative Faye Culp and Amanda Mason, chair of Making Reading a Reality. Workshops included information on a women's health initiative in Georgia on osteoporosis, and a presentation by Diane Cabrera, Miss Latina, USA.

Other national topics included: *Understanding and Preventing Sexual Harassment*, *Parliamentary Procedure for Commissions*, *ERA: Women's Unfinished Business*, *Rural Women's Health Project*, *Women and AIDS: A Growing Challenge*, and *Modern Day Slavery: The Tragedy of Human Trafficking*, *Women's Leadership: Programs of the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau*, and *Understanding and Preventing Sexual Harassment*.

On Saturday, July 16, the NACW professionals joined the 2005 Florida Conference for Women with Keynote Speaker Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture, State of Florida. Valuable sessions included a wide variety of topics and organizations: The Office of Florida Governor Jeb Bush, the Jimmy Ryce Center for Victims of Predatory Abduction, Windsor Lewis Sofield, the Florida Immigration Advocacy Center, the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Tibotec Pharmaceutical. A Women's Expo featured information and products of interest to women. The luncheon provided a display of body images by Larry Kirkwood who uses the art of body-casting to fight against manipulated images of beauty in the media.

These commissions are advocates for equality and justice for women, serving their communities in a variety of ways. Some maintain shelters for abused women, others have tutorial programs for teens and adults, others testify before their legislators on issues that impact women and their families. Each commission functions independently, but works with NACW to provide national leadership and focus on their collective concerns. Member Commissions for Women, through NACW, keep the needs of women at the forefront of laws, policies, practices, and promote the improvement of the status of women.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women. Eleanor Roosevelt was the chair and Esther Peterson of the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, was vice-chair. The Commission produced a report containing the recommendation that each state form a similar commission.